(b) if so, how many days this deployment has been till date; and

(c) the average daily additional expenditure incurred for effecting/ retaining this deployment?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) There is no improvement in the cross-border terrorism abetted by Pakistan. Accordingly, the Government of India have decided that in order to meet any exigencies, it would be in the interest of the nation to continue the deployment of troops, which started from 19.12.2001, on the border. The financial implications of the on-going deployment of the Armed forces can be properly assessed only after the moblisation is over.

Tracing 54 POWs in Pakistani Jails

3246. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have been approached by the kith and kin of POWs to appoint an independent investigative agency to trace 54 POWs. who had been held captive in Pakistani jails since 1971 war;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) what constructive steps are being taken to trace them?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The relatives of Indian POWs believed to be in Pakistani jails have suggested to the Government that all possible steps be considered for ensuring location, release and repatriation of these POWs.

(b) and (c) Government has taken all possible steps including consistently taking up the issue of release and repatriation of missing Indian Defence Personnel with the Government of Pakistan at all levels. The Government of Pakistan has, however, never acknowledged their presence in its custody. Government would continue to take up the issue with Pakistan Government to secure their early release and repatriation.

Takeover of immigration check-posts

3247. SHRI RUMANDLA .RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has decided to takeover all immigration check-posts from the States in a phased manner;